

Native American Treaties

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Paper

Historical Paper Length: 1918

The Native Americans have a rich cultural way of living and have been in what is now the United States of America for approximately 12,000 years. More than 370 ratified treaties have helped the United States expand its territory or resolve conflict with the Native Americans and the United States Government. However, treaties and promises have been broken over time, treating the Native Americans unreasonably. Due to a desire to expand its territories and discover new ones, the United States government forced Native Americans off of their lands in bloody conflict. After much fighting and loss, treaties were established between the Native Americans and the United States government to help the tribes resolve their losses and to help the United States grow. The compromises that the Native Americans made were much greater than the sacrifices that the United States made, which were almost none. The treaties were upheld for decades, until the United States began to falter on its promises.

The Native Americans had been in the Americas for around 11,600 years before the white settlers showed up in 1607-1620. The first Native Americans were documented as inhabiting the United States approximately 12,000 years ago, or in 10,000 BC. The first Native Americans were called Paleo-Indians, according Oxford research Encyclopedia of American History. They came to Wisconsin during or after the retreat of the last continental glacier. Archaeologists believe that the Paleo-Indians came over the land bridge that connected Asia and Alaska (Museum Link: Illinois). There is little known about the Paleo-Indians as they left little evidence about their cultural, spiritual, and personal lives. Some think that the Paleo-Indians came after the retreat because of the rich soil. They lived in groups, or tribes, of around 20-50 people.

They often lived in caves, but archaeologists have also found scrappy shelters made of animal skins. The Paleo-Indians decided where to set up camps based mostly on the hunting, killing and eating of animals like mastodons, caribou, bison, and mammoth. Archaeologists think that when the Paleo-Indians started hunting, they started with trapping smaller prey. But they were most famous for inventing spears with stone and flint points. Archaeologists even suspect that a large group of Paleo-Indians would herd bigger game off of steep ledges to kill them. Besides the game that they hunted, Paleo-Indians also ate seeds, fruits, roots, and even insects. They often made clothes out of animal skin and plants, and they carried their supplies on their backs. Archaeologists have little to no information on the Paleo-Indians religion, language, beliefs, celebrations, ceremonies, mournings, and cultural things such as dance and family relationships. They became extinct about 9,000 years ago, taking most of the secrets of their ways with them. The best evidence noted of the Paleo-Indians in Wisconsin are their effigy mounds. An effigy mound is a mound of dirt in the form of an animal. In the Madison area alone, there are at least 20 effigy mounds. When the first European explorers landed in Wisconsin in the 1600's, there were several Native American tribes established. These tribes included the Ojibwe, Menominee, Ho-Chunk, Potawatomi, Kickapoo, Sauk, Fox, Illinois, Miami, Mascouten, Huron, Ottawa, and the Santee Sioux. There are only four remaining tribes in Wisconsin; the Ojibwa, Menominee, Ho-Chunk, and Potawatomi. There are also four other tribes that still exist in Wisconsin that migrated from the East; the Mohicans (the Mohicans have 2 separate branches of their tribes; the Stockbridge and the Munsee), the Brotherton, and the

Oneida. French explorers first arrived in Wisconsin in the early 1800's. The French explorers took Native American Indians' lands and forced them to scatter. The way the white settlers and the people of the United States charged into Native American Indian lands resulted in a period of conflicts, which rose mass bloody wars and skirmishes. While it is true that the French were more powerful than the Native Americans (the French had more men, more advanced weapons, and more knowledge), it was not ethical of the white settlers to storm into the Native Americans' established lands and destroy their ways of life.

After many conflicts and bloody battles, compromise in the form of treaties were created to end fighting and battles between Native American Indians and white settlers. More than 370 treaties have been created and ratified to help the United States expand their territory and resolve conflict with the Native Americans.

An example of a conflict and compromise that happened between the Native Americans and the United States Government is the Sioux Treaty of 1868, also known as the Fort Laramie Treaty. In the 19th century, the new American push to expand clashed brutally with the Native American push to preserve their land and ways. From the 1860s to 1870s, America was filled with horrible battles and wars. The United States Army set out to sign a series of treaties with the Native Americans that would force the Native Americans to give up their lands and move to reservations further west. In the spring of 1868, a conference was held in Fort Laramie that resulted in a treaty with the Sioux. The treaty brought peace between the white settlers and the Sioux, as the treaty declared that, "From this day forward all war between the parties to this agreement shall

forever cease. The government of the United States desires peace, and its honor is hereby pledged to keep it. The Indians desire peace, and they now pledge their honor to maintain it" (Yale Law School: Lillian Goldman Law Library). The treaty also gave the Native Americans a protected reserve (The Black Hills Reservation in South Dakota), and goods for 30 years after the treaty was signed. The Black Hills are now a sacred place among the Sioux, because the Sioux believe that it is the birthplace of their nation. It was the land where the Sioux ancestors lived, and where most of their legends originated.

The series of treaties that were created during the 1860's-1870s were a good idea at the time, and they worked for awhile. But after several years of upholding them, the United States started to break the promises that were made in the treaties. An example of the United States breaking a treaty is the Removal Act of 1830. The United States had pressured the Native Americans to let them buy all of the land east of the Mississippi River, in exchange for land in the west that the United States promised nobody would be allowed to settle on. However, the treaty was broken when the United States let white travelers and traders settle on the land.

The United States has kept some of their promises to the Native Americans. One of the oldest treaties that still physically exists and is still upheld to this day is the Treaty of Canandaigua, also known as the Pickering Treaty. The treaty was signed on November 11, 1794 between the United States Federal Government and the Haudenosaunee, or the Six Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy, in New York. The Six Nations are Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Mohawk and Tuscarora. The treaty was

signed by sachems, or the chiefs of the Six Nations and Colonel Timothy Pickering, who represented George Washington. The United States also sent General Israel Chapin. The Six Nations sent 1600 representatives to the meeting, with the Seneca sending an impressive amount of 800 representatives. The treaty returned more than a million acres and \$4,500 in goods (such as cloth) annually to the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and was also said to bring friendship between the young United States and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. It also brought about a law to the Six Nations that officially separated them and turned them into their own six different nations. The leaders of the Haudenosaunee have said that cloth is more important to them than money, because it reminds the United States of the treaties terms large and small. Now, more than 200 years later, there is a festival held in Canandaigua, New York. The festival celebrates the treaty that brings goods and friendship to the Six Nations.

Another Treaty that was upheld would be the Chickasaw Treaty of 1818, or the Jackson Purchase. The treaty states that, "Peace and friendship are hereby firmly established and made perpetual, between the United States of America and the Chickasaw nation of Indians" (Firstpeople.us). The Jackson Purchase gave the United States the land east of the Mississippi River, and north of the Mississippi state line. In return, the Chickasaw received \$300,000 at a rate of \$20,000 yearly for 15 years. The benefits of the purchase for the United States was that it expanded the United States territory by around 8,000 square miles (2,369 square miles of Kentucky and 5,631 square miles of Tennessee territory was expanded), and the benefits for the Chickasaw from the purchase were that they got \$300,000 dollars.

In the treaties themselves, the United States was never fair to the Native Americans. The United States gave them protected areas of land called Federal Indian Reservations, or just reservations for short. Reservations were given to Native American Tribes that had a treaty or other kind of agreement with the Federal Government. Wisconsin has the most reservations of any state east of the Mississippi River, with 11 reservations. However, many Native Americans still reside in the Milwaukee area, rather than in the large reservations in the north or the smaller reservations in the south.

There were other ways that other countries tried to “civilize” the Native Americans. One example was with Spain. When Spain conquered Mexico, they also conquered what is currently California. The Spanish had the California territory at the time. In 1760, at current day San Francisco, the Spanish spotted Russian fur trappers. They had been straying further and further from their land of current day Alaska. They had discovered the territory of Alta California over two centuries before this point, and didn’t do anything because it was hard to access. To be accessed, they needed to travel there by ship. It was so hard to sail there because they had to sail against currents and wind. After the fur trappers were spotted, the missions were built in 1769 (California missions foundation). The missionaries, or missions, were built primarily to civilize the territory of Alta California. The Native Americans there were told that they could either convert religion to Catholic and join the Spanish, or become slaves. If they chose to join the Spanish, they would be baptized in the mission and brought into the faith, then they were considered “civilized”.

Today, only 1% of the population in the United States is Native American. The United States weren't and still aren't fair to the Native Americans. They have broken almost all of their promises to them, and they never respected the ways or the Native Americans as we gave them a lot less than they needed. Due to a desire to expand its territories and discover new ones, the United States government forced Native Americans off of their lands in bloody conflict. After much fighting and loss, several treaties were established between the Native Americans and the United States government to help the tribes resolve their losses and to help the United States grow. The compromise on the Native Americans part was much greater than the sacrifices that the United States made, which were almost none. The treaties were upheld for decades, until the United States began to falter on their promises.

Annotated Bibliography

Primary Sources:

Clark, Linda Darus. "Sioux Treaty of 1868." *National Archives and Records Administration*, National Archives and Records Administration

This website explained our treaties with the Sioux Native American Tribe. This website had a lot of different documents that held treaties, which was very useful to my research because it gave me a primary source and also gave me the real treaties to look at. I picked this resource because it is a .gov website, which means its run by the government. I have found that government-run websites are more trustworthy than the .com ones.

Kappler, Joseph Charles. "Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties." *CONTENTdm*, Oklahoma University,

This was an amazing source! It had a digital library of Native American Treaties. It had a lot of very useful information on it, and it was easy to navigate. I chose this source because it is an Oklahoma University website, and I think that University websites are very trustworthy.

McLaughlin, David J. "Why the Spanish Built the Missions and the Purpose of the Missions." *California Missions Resource Center*, 2003

This source had a lot of information on the California missions. The missions were a series of churches and sanctuaries to civilize the Native Americans there and form towns. The Native Americans were given the choice to either become "civilized" or become slaves. I chose this resource because it explained missions really well and was easy to understand.

"Unratified California Treaty K, 1852." *Nation to Nation*, Smithsonian Museum of the American Indian

This source simply had a document for the unratified California Treaty K, but after looking around the site some more I found that it had a lot of other treaties. It had a lot of treaties that were very helpful to my research. I liked this source a lot because it was easy to navigate and had of different information on it.

Wang, Hansi Lo. "Broken Promises On Display At Native American Treaties Exhibit." *NPR*, NPR, 18 Jan. 2015

This source was awesome! It had a lot of amazing information on the Treaty of Canandaigua, also known as the Pickering Treaty. The Treaty of Canandaigua was a Treaty that secured goods for the Native Americans forever. It is one of the few treaties that still exist today.

Secondary Sources:

“Paleoindian.” *Native Americans: Prehistoric: Paleoindian*, Museum Link: Illinois,

This was a great source. It had a lot of useful information that really helped my paper. The source explained who and what the paleo indians were and what their ways of life were. I also explained how the paleo indians got to America and how they made a life here. I really liked this source, as it had minimal amounts of reading and was easy to understand. It also provided pictures and maps.

Higham, Carol L. “Christian Missions to American Indians.” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of American History*, 8 June 2017

This was an OK source. It was jammed packed with facts and other information. The source itself compared Catholic missions to Protestant missions. The downside to the source was that it had a lot of reading in it and it was kind of hard to read and follow along.

“The California Missions.” *California Missions Foundation*, California Missions Foundation, 2 Sept. 1983

This was my favorite source for this project. It explained missions really well, it explained what they were, why they were built, and where and how they were built. I really liked this resource a lot! It provided a lot of facts and information about missions in California.